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Dramatic Publishing

Cummins and Scoullar's

The Little Prince[☆]

the play

~large-cast version~

by
Rick Cummins and John Scoullar

Adapted from the book
by
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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RICK CUMMINS and JOHN SCOULLAR

Adapted from the book by
ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY

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(THE LITTLE PRINCE, the play, large-cast version)

ISBN 1-58342-005-3

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Originally produced off-Broadway by Chrysalis Productions at the John Houseman Theatre Complex. Earlier version produced and directed by Michael Harron at Playhouse by the River, Mt. Bethel, Pa.

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AUTHORS' NOTE

This large-cast version of *The Little Prince* utilizes a special stage ensemble of 6-8 actors. We envision these actors dressed inconspicuously (e.g., in black unitards and head coverings), moving in subtle stylized fashion, and using various simple props. The ensemble should become "human scenery," inspiring the audience to see the illusions they create without drawing attention to themselves as individuals. As indicated in the script, they can help create the illusion of flight, glorious sunsets, starry skies, and wind-swept sand dunes. They can facilitate the appearance of volcanoes, baobabs, trees, and wheat fields. The script indications are our staging suggestions. Use them as they are or elaborate on them if you wish. When used tastefully and sparingly, they can be effective and fun. Remember, less is more. Have fun and "break a leg!"

THE LITTLE PRINCE

A Full-length Play With Optional Intermission
For up to 32 actors

CHARACTERS

Aviator

Little Prince

Rose

King

Conceited Man

Businessman

Lamplighter

Geographer

Snake

Desert Flower

Fox

Sketch Artist

Special Stage Ensemble (6-8)

Optional extra roses for the Wall of Roses (12)

THE LITTLE PRINCE

AT RISE: *The ENSEMBLE is in place, holding multi-branched sticks dotted with small lights and/or “stars” of different sizes, creating a starry frame around the projection screen.*

(Projection screen fades up. [Tape Cue #1] An ethereal solo voice sings as a hand is seen making a simple drawing. See Illustration B.)



When it is completed, lights come up on AVIATOR, pencil in hand, admiring the drawing on his pad, which we are to assume is the same as the one on the screen. AVIATOR addresses the audience as though imparting a great confidence.

AVIATOR. When I was six years old, once upon a very long time ago, I made this drawing. I showed my masterpiece to the grown-ups and asked, “Does it frighten you?” But they said, “Why should anyone be frightened by a hat?” It was not a hat. So I drew it for them more clearly. Grown-ups always need to have things explained to them.

([Tape Cue #2] As he draws, the hand in the projection sketches again. See Illustration C.)



It was a boa constrictor having swallowed an elephant. But this time they said, “Put those crayons away and study arithmetic or geography or something *important*.” So I did...but I always kept my first drawing with me as a test of true understanding.

([Tape Cue #3] The first drawing re-appears. See Illustration B.)



AVIATOR. But no matter who I showed it to, they would always say, “That is a hat.” So I threw it away and I never again spoke to them about boa constrictors, or primeval forests, or stars. And I never again made another drawing. *(Crumple drawing in fist. Illustration B off.)* I learned to pilot airplanes.

([Tape Cue #4] Sound of plane is heard. If no set piece is used for plane, drawing of plane comes up. See Illustration D. During the next line, AVIATOR dons a scarf and aviator hat and sits either in the plane or on a stool in front of the projected drawing. As he sits, the ENSEMBLE’s stars move and surround the plane.)

And I lived my life alone...until six years ago, when I had an accident with my plane in the Desert of Sahara.

(There is thunder and lightning. AVIATOR is in a storm. Coordinated movement of the stars may help demonstrate the turbulence of the storm.)

Whoa! Hold on there, my friend. Where are we? Somewhere over the Sahara, I imagine. *(More turbulence.)* Or some otherwhere. *(Engine sputters.)* What’s the matter

with you? (*More sputtering.*) Looks like I'm going to have to take you down. (*Plane swoops. AVIATOR speaks into radio.*) Come in, Tangiers. Tangiers, come in. This is Solitaire. (*Storm escalates.*) Somebody! Anybody! Come in! Isn't anybody there? Solitaire going down for emergency landing. Making emergency landing approximately— (*Engine stops. Plane begins to descend.*) Woooo— (*He force lands in a confusion of lights as the ENSEMBLE exits by scattering off the stage and Illustration D (if used) fades out. Music continues.*)

BLACKOUT

(*Lights up slowly on AVIATOR asleep on the sand and then revealing the LITTLE PRINCE behind a scrim.*)

LITTLE PRINCE. Please, sir, draw me a sheep. (*Music ends.*)

AVIATOR (*sits up suddenly as if from a nightmare.*)
What! (*He sees nothing. AVIATOR gets up slowly, walks around getting his bearings. He is confused. The LITTLE PRINCE appears again elsewhere behind scrim.*)

LITTLE PRINCE. Draw me a sheep.

AVIATOR (*turns, spots him, and heads toward him.*)
Hello! Hello— Who are you?— Where— (*LITTLE PRINCE has vanished. AVIATOR is at a loss. He looks fearfully around him.*) Where are we? (*Standing in place, he winces as he feels sand in his boot. Removing it, he pours sand out. With understanding, and relieved, if cynical, resignation:*) Something tells me this isn't the Riviera. (*AVIATOR goes to plane, remembering.*) Ah

yes, the storm...the engine trouble...the radio...*the radio!* (*He goes to the radio.*) Come in, Tangiers! Do you read me? Cairo, come in! Somebody! (*He discovers radio cord is severed and slams down headset.*) Damn!

(LITTLE PRINCE has now entered, pad and pencil in hand, standing atop a dune.)

LITTLE PRINCE. If you please, draw me a sheep.

AVIATOR (*taken back and totally confused*). You—there—here—in the desert— But who— (*LITTLE PRINCE approaches. AVIATOR sits in weakness.*)

LITTLE PRINCE. Draw me a sheep.

AVIATOR (*after a beat, blankly*). I don't draw!

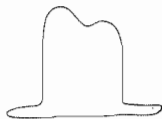
LITTLE PRINCE. You used to.

AVIATOR. How would you know—

LITTLE PRINCE (*firmly*). Draw me a sheep.

AVIATOR (*to audience*). When a mystery is too overpowering, one dares not disobey.

(Taking pad and pencil, the AVIATOR complies reluctantly. As he draws, the hand in the projection sketches AVIATOR's first drawing. See Illustration B. [Tape Cue #5] AVIATOR hands his drawing to the LITTLE PRINCE.)



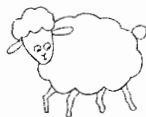
LITTLE PRINCE. No no no! I don't want an elephant inside a boa constrictor. A boa constrictor is very dangerous and an elephant is very large. I need a sheep. Draw me a sheep.

(AVIATOR is shocked. As he flips page of pad up, artist removes Illustration B. AVIATOR reluctantly begins to draw again. See Illustration E. [Tape Cue #6] AVIATOR hands him the drawing.)



LITTLE PRINCE. You can see for yourself that's not a sheep. It's a ram, see? It has horns.

(AVIATOR, annoyed, flips page same as before. Artist removes Illustration E. AVIATOR tries again. See Illustration F. [Tape Cue #7] AVIATOR hands him another.)



This one is too old. I want a sheep that will live a long time.

(Frustrated, AVIATOR grabs pad out of LITTLE PRINCE's hand. He takes a deep breath, flips the page as before. Artist removes Illustration F. AVIATOR draws with finality. See Illustration G.)



AVIATOR. This is a box. *(Handing drawing to LITTLE PRINCE.)* The sheep that you want is inside.

LITTLE PRINCE. That is exactly the way I wanted it! *(LITTLE PRINCE exits. Illustration G fades out.)*

AVIATOR *(to audience)*. And that was how I made the acquaintance of this strange little man.

([Tape Cue #8] AVIATOR goes to his plane. Music ends.)

The next day, just before sunset, as I worked on my plane a thousand miles from any human habitation ...

(LITTLE PRINCE enters.)

...he appeared again. It took me a long time to learn where he came from. This little person, who asked so many questions, never seemed to hear the ones I asked.

LITTLE PRINCE. It is true, isn't it? Sheep eat little bushes?

AVIATOR *(turns, startled)*. Where did you go yesterday?

LITTLE PRINCE. It is true, isn't it?

AVIATOR *(exasperated)*. Yes.

LITTLE PRINCE. Then it follows that they also eat baobabs, correct?

AVIATOR. Baobabs are not little bushes. They're trees as big as castles, and—

LITTLE PRINCE. But before they grow so big, the baobabs, they start out by being little?

AVIATOR. Strictly speaking, yes. Where is your family? Where do you come from? Why do you want the sheep to eat the little baobabs, anyway? *(LITTLE PRINCE doesn't answer, he has wandered over to plane.)* Don't you ever answer a question?

LITTLE PRINCE. What is this object?

AVIATOR *(turns, startled)*. That is not an object. That is my airplane ... my—friend. *(With irony.)*

LITTLE PRINCE *(investigates the plane)*. Hello.

AVIATOR. It doesn't talk. It's true, I talk to it occasionally—but it doesn't answer back.

LITTLE PRINCE. That doesn't seem very satisfactory. (*LITTLE PRINCE is puzzled.*)

AVIATOR. It's an airplane! It flies!

LITTLE PRINCE. You dropped down from the sky?

AVIATOR. Yes. (*LITTLE PRINCE laughs. AVIATOR is miffed. LITTLE PRINCE tries to suppress his laughter.*)

What's so funny?! (*LITTLE PRINCE bursts into laughter again. AVIATOR speaks to audience.*) His laughter irritated me. I liked my misfortunes taken seriously. (*With a look from the AVIATOR, LITTLE PRINCE contains his laughter.*)

LITTLE PRINCE. You too come from the sky. Which is your planet?

AVIATOR. What?

LITTLE PRINCE. Though it is true that on that airplane you couldn't have come very far.

AVIATOR. You come from another planet?

LITTLE PRINCE. Listen to that sunset. Do you hear the music?

AVIATOR. What music?

LITTLE PRINCE. It's wonderful that the sunset lasts such a long time here. Where I come from, the sunsets are much shorter, but there are so many more of them.

AVIATOR. It's clear I'm not going to get a straight answer out of you. I have to get back to my pl— (*AVIATOR heads back to plane.*)

LITTLE PRINCE. One day I watched the sun set forty-four times.

AVIATOR. Forty-four times?

LITTLE PRINCE (*takes his hand*). Come with me.

AVIATOR (*pulling his hand away*). Enough of this. I have important things to—

([Tape Cue #9] The lights abruptly change as the ENSEMBLE enters at the wings and instantly creates a magnificent evolving sunset, stopping AVIATOR mid-sentence. LITTLE PRINCE offers his hand to stunned AVIATOR.)

LITTLE PRINCE. Come.

(AVIATOR takes his hand and follows in awe as they walk through the sunset. [NOTE: ENSEMBLE could create this sunset through the use of shards of red, yellow, orange, and purple lightweight translucent fabric, waved like shredded banners or ribbons from wings on each side of the stage, in a Japanese Noh Theatre-like fashion. This would embellish a central glow of stage lighting—on the backdrop—as it changes colors and slowly descends.]

You see, where I come from, it is so small that all you need to do is move your chair a few steps and you can see the day end and the twilight fall as many times as you like. But here on your planet you can walk and walk and still be in the same magnificent sunset. *(They continue to walk.)* One loves the sunset when one is so sad.

AVIATOR. Were you so sad, then?

LITTLE PRINCE. I kept wondering what it was that I was missing and wishing I had. *(The sun has set, the ENSEMBLE exits, and the starry night sky fades up.)* So far away from home it's good to have someone to watch the sunset with. *(Music ends. LITTLE PRINCE is looking at his drawing.)* The thing that is so good about the box you've given me is that at night my sheep can use it as his house.

AVIATOR. And if you're good, I'll draw you a string and a post so you can tie him during the day.

LITTLE PRINCE. Tie him? What a strange idea!

AVIATOR. Well, he might run off.

LITTLE PRINCE. Run off? Where do you think he would go?

AVIATOR. Anywhere. Straight ahead.

LITTLE PRINCE (*laughs, pause*). Straight ahead, nobody can go very far. (*The AVIATOR is puzzled. LITTLE PRINCE is starting to leave.*) Look for me tomorrow—just at sunset.

AVIATOR. But—why do you come only at sunset? (*LITTLE PRINCE leaves.*) And where do you think you're going? (*LITTLE PRINCE is gone.*) Look, I really don't intend to be here all that long— (*Mumbling to himself.*) Straight ahead, nobody can go very far. (*Calling after LITTLE PRINCE.*) What's that supposed to mean? (*Going to plane, he frantically checks it all over for damage. To plane:*) Come on, we'll find out what the matter is right now and leave this bizarre little episode behind us. We can do it. You can do it. You've never let me down before. (*Frustrated, he kicks the plane. He sits, perturbed and alone. [Tape Cue #10] The sound of a rattle is heard and we see the shadow of a snake.*)

BLACKOUT

(The sound trails off through the blackout. Lights come up on AVIATOR reviewing the supplies he takes from his knapsack.)

AVIATOR. Let's see now— (*He takes out a pastry.*) One half-eaten croissant. (*He nibbles.*) Stale. (*He puts it down and takes out some cheese.*) Some lovely cheese— (*He sniffs it. It is powerful.*) Ripe. (*He retrieves an unidentifiable object and examines it from a number of angles.*) Some—other thing. I'm sure if I'm here long enough I'll find it delectable. But I'm equally as sure that it's not going to come to that. (*To plane.*) Today you are going to be more cooperative. Right, my friend?

(*LITTLE PRINCE appears. [Tape Cue #11] The sun begins to set.*)

LITTLE PRINCE. Talking again to your friend who doesn't answer back? (*AVIATOR turns to LITTLE PRINCE startled. Then turns away and feigns disinterest.*)

AVIATOR (*dryly*). Sunset so soon?

LITTLE PRINCE (*picks up canteen*). What is this? (*Examining canteen.*)

AVIATOR. It's water. It's my survival, thank you. (*AVIATOR snatches it back.*)

LITTLE PRINCE. On my journey, I met a man who sold pills to quench thirst. If you took one a week, you'd never need water.

AVIATOR. They could come in handy—you don't happen to have any, do you?

LITTLE PRINCE. If I were thirsty—I think I'd rather take a stroll to a spring of fresh water.

AVIATOR. That would be nice. (*Drinking, he stops, realizing he must ration.*) But, since there's no spring of fresh water here in the desert, and you don't have any of those

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IMPORTANT: READ CAREFULLY

NOTES ON THE SKETCH ARTIST

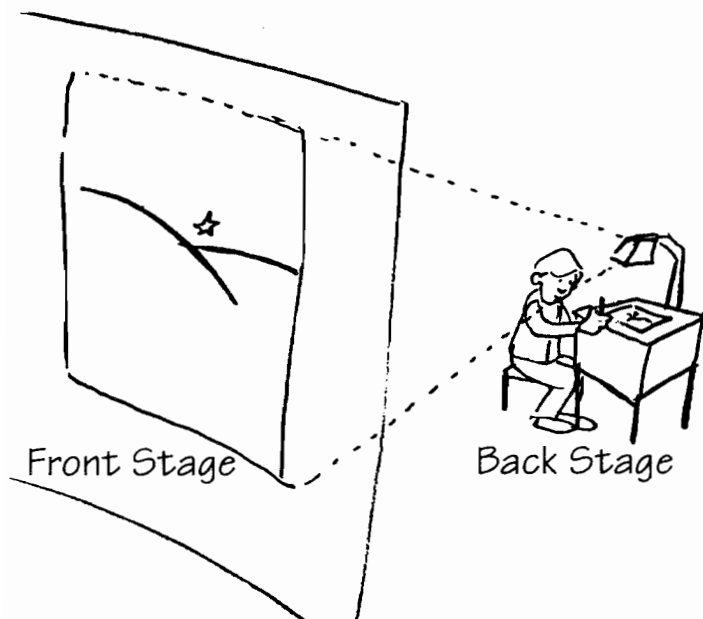
The role of the offstage sketch artist is an important one but it need not be difficult. The drawings displayed in this table are very simple and many of them appear in the show already partially or entirely pre-drawn. They are presented here with a numerical key which indicates the order in which the lines should be drawn. This is to simplify the task of synchronizing the strokes of the artist with those of the AVIATOR on stage. The effect is stunning but does require some rehearsal to be completely successful.

Although any number of methods can be used, the projection technique we suggest is that of an ordinary overhead projector, some acetates, and washable markers so that the acetates may be reused. It is easy and inexpensive. You should try, however, to install a dimmer to your projector so the drawings can fade up and down. Illustration A shows the setup of this rear projection method. Any fabric that will take light such as muslin or parachute fabric or rip-stop nylon can serve as a screen and backdrop.

As to the projection, the distance from the projector to the screen is approximately the same as the size of the image that will appear. For instance, if the projector is placed six feet behind the screen a six foot (measured diagonally) image will be thrown. Finally, attention should be paid to the fact that sometimes these cues are also coordinated with music as indicated in the script.

ILLUSTRATION A.

NOTE: When drawing on the overhead projector, figures will be reversed, left to right, when they are projected.



The following 20 illustrations may be photocopied and enlarged for projection. This text is completely protected by copyright. These 20 illustrations are the only part of this text which may be copied in any way, and then only for use as projections in conjunction with productions of the play.

ILLUSTRATION B.

Drawing sequence:

1. Draw Outline.
2. Draw eye last.

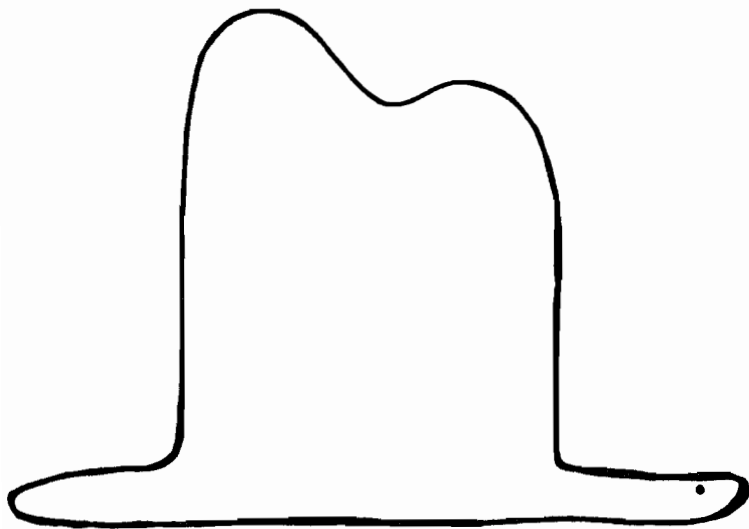


ILLUSTRATION C.

Drawing sequence:

1. Outline Snake.
2. Elephant
3. End on Elephant's tail.

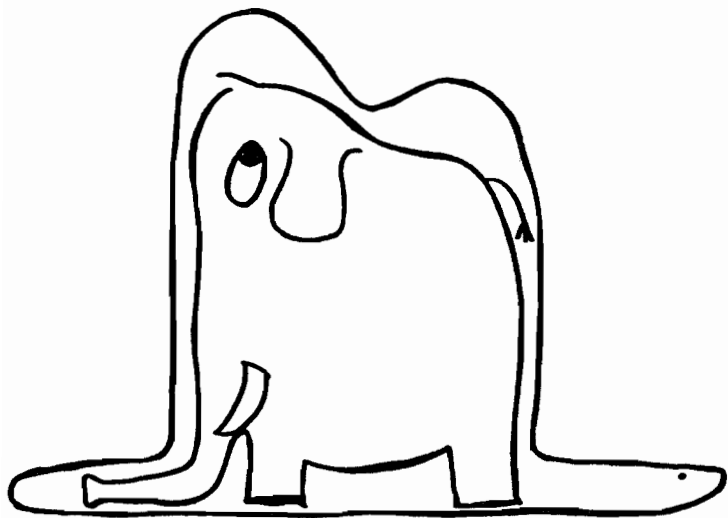


ILLUSTRATION D.

This drawing may be used if no set piece suggesting a plane is used.

The AVIATOR may sit on a stool in front of drawing and coordinate his movements with the backstage sketch artist who can simply move the acetate around to simulate flight.

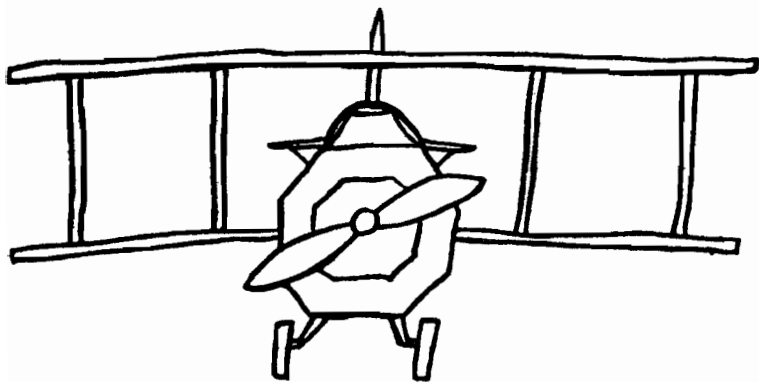


ILLUSTRATION E.

Drawing Sequence:

1. Head.
2. Body.
3. Tail.
4. Ears
5. Legs
6. Eyes without eyeballs.
7. Nose and Mouth.

PAUSE, then draw

8. Horns.
9. Eyeballs.

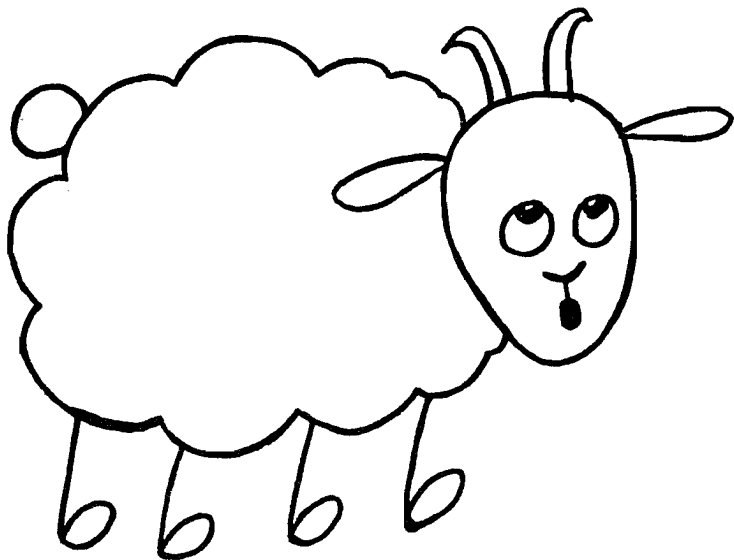


ILLUSTRATION F.

Drawing sequence:

1. Head.
2. Body.
3. Tail.
4. Ears.
5. Legs.
6. Eyes, Nose, Mouth
7. Eyeballs Last.

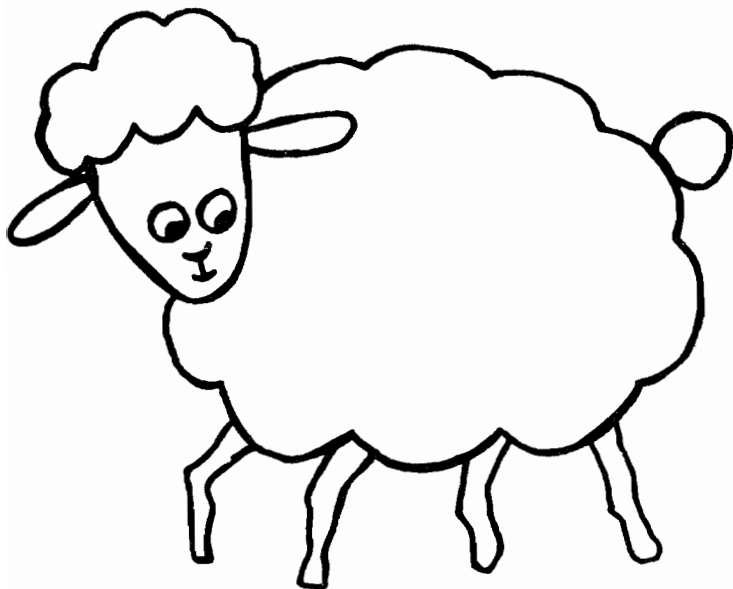


ILLUSTRATION G.

Drawing direction:
BOX - drawn fast as if angry.

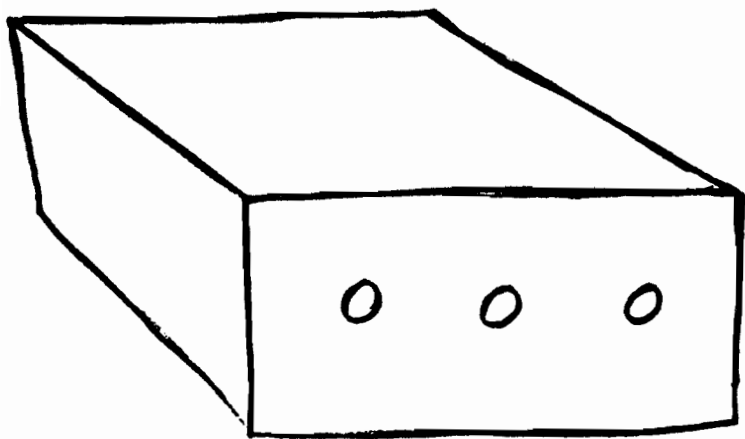


ILLUSTRATION H.

Drawing sequence: 1. Petals. 2. Stem. 3. Ground—
Projector fades out.

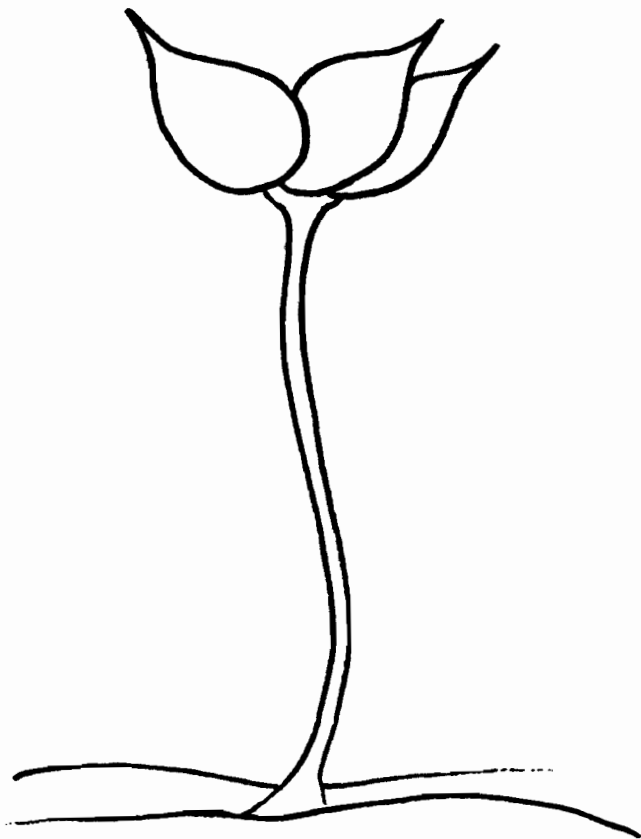


ILLUSTRATION 1.

Projector comes up— ROSE is finished.
Add: 1. Thorns. 2. A couple of petals.
Tear is drawn on last note of song.

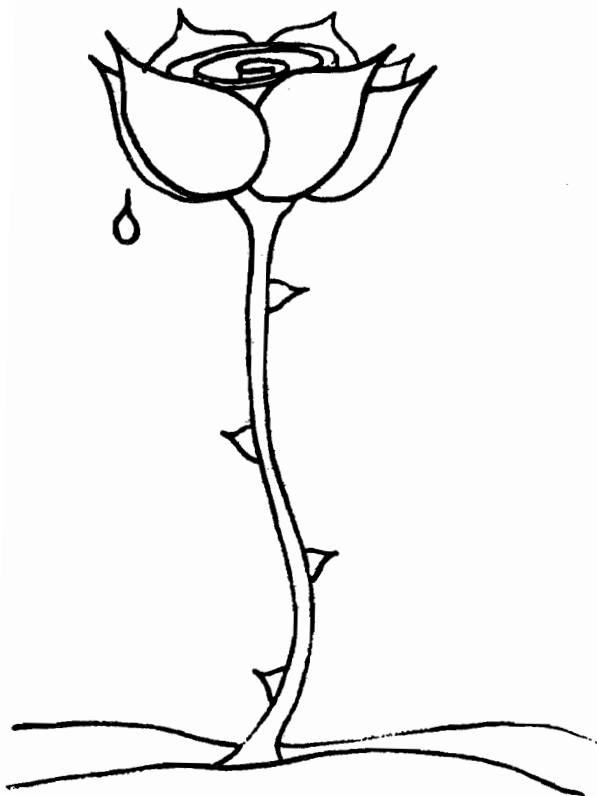


ILLUSTRATION J.

Drawing comes up fully drawn.
Just add some stars on robe.

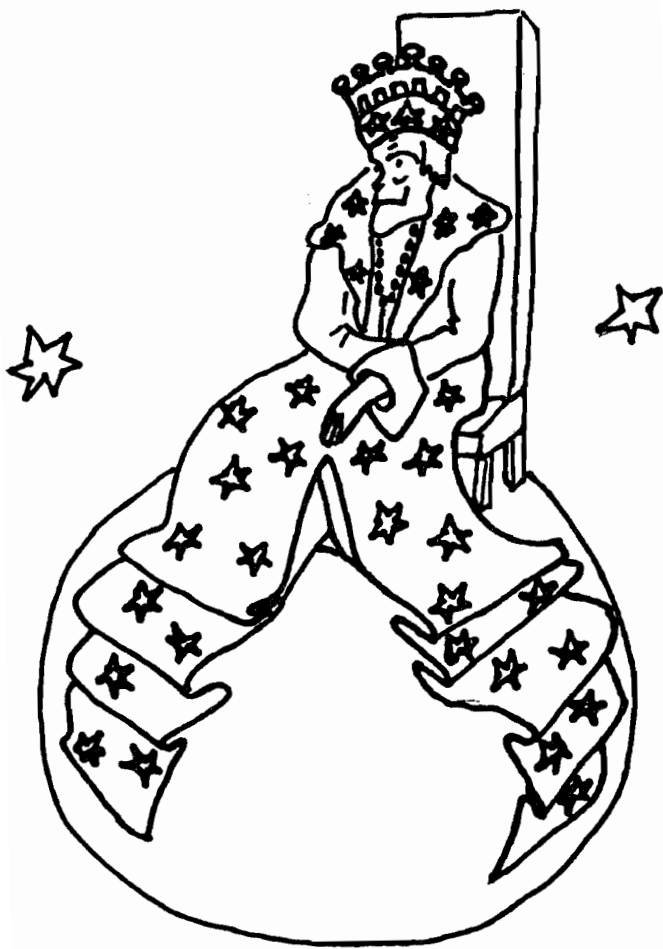


ILLUSTRATION M.

Drawing sequence:
Projector comes up. PRINCE already drawn.

Just add SNAKE at:
“you know, you shouldn’t talk to snakes...”

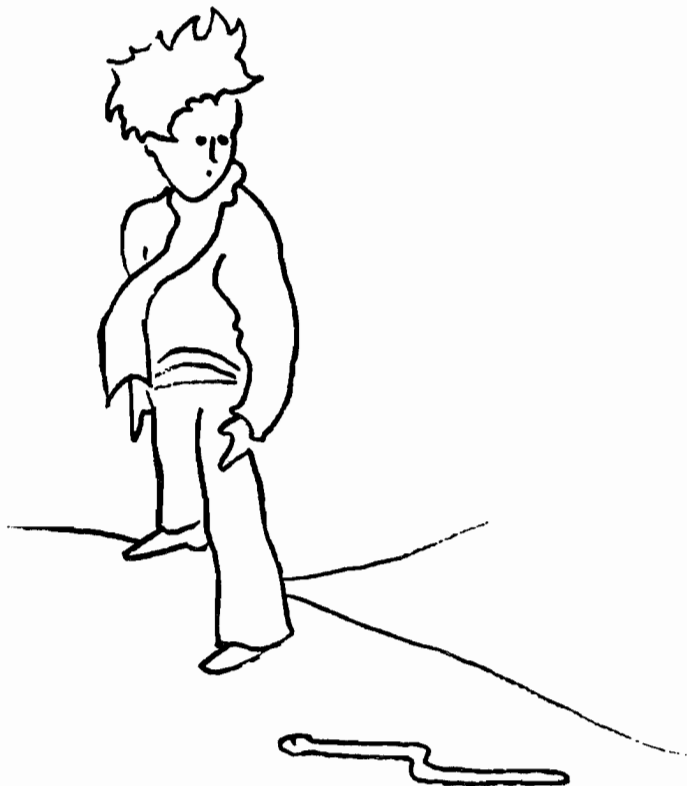


ILLUSTRATION N.

Drawing sequence:
Muzzle— Drawn very fast!

1. Large end.
2. Small end.
3. Connector strips.

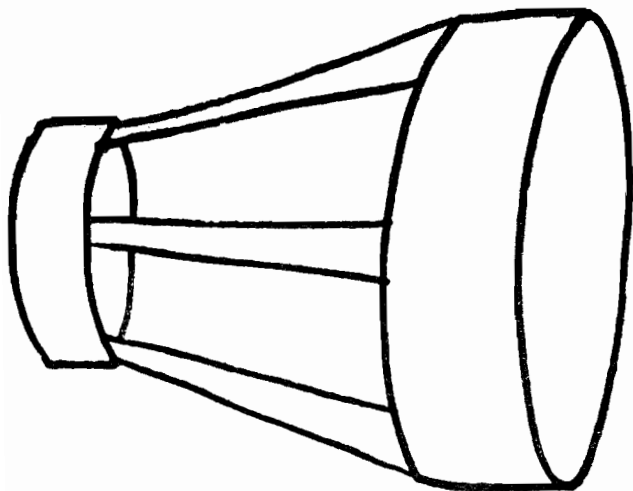


ILLUSTRATION 0.

- Drawing sequence: 1. Start with ground on
CUE: "After I crossed the desert..."
2. Continue upwards drawing flower.

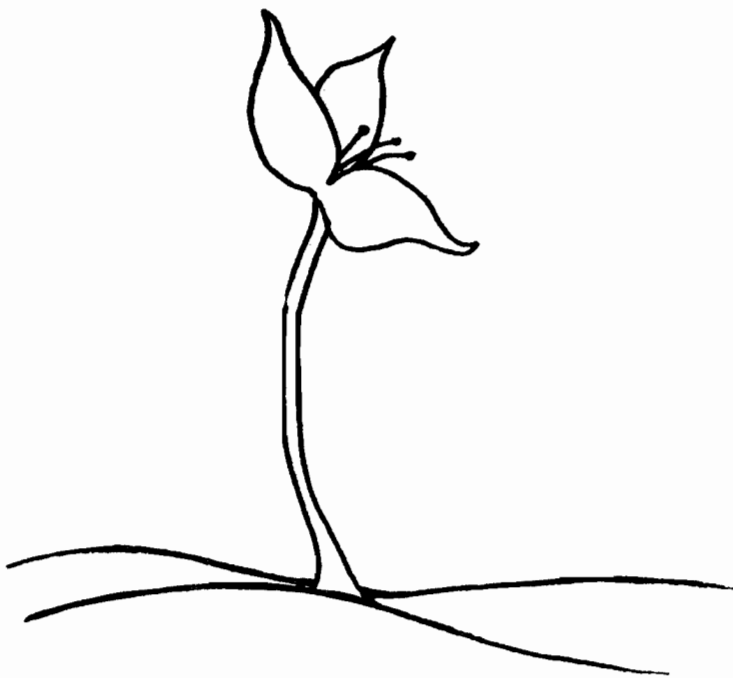


ILLUSTRATION P.

- Drawing sequence: 1. Start with mountain on...
CUE: "After that, I climbed a high mountain!"
2. Continue with sun.
 3. Pointy rocks.



ILLUSTRATION Q.

Drawing sequence: 1. Ground. 2. Mountains. 3. Road.



ILLUSTRATION R.

Projector comes up— everything is drawn.
Just add apple.

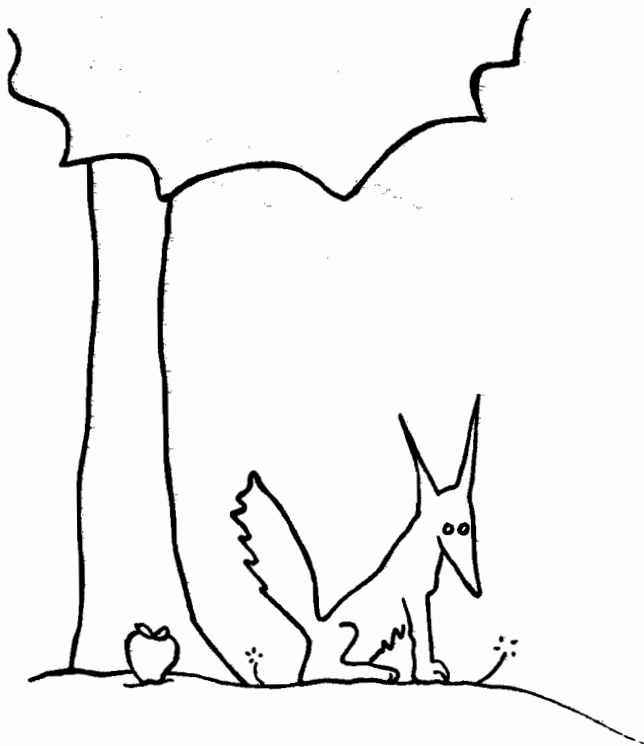


ILLUSTRATION 5.

Drawing sequence:

1. Long curve.
2. Short curve.
3. Star.

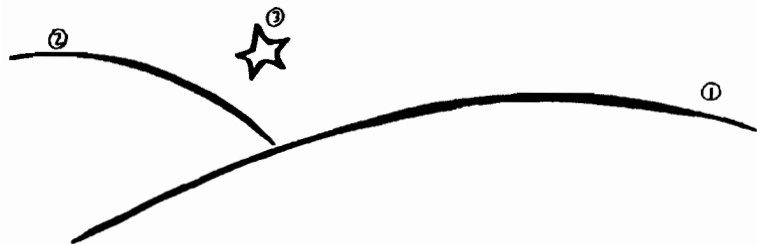


ILLUSTRATION T.

Comes up fully drawn in full color.

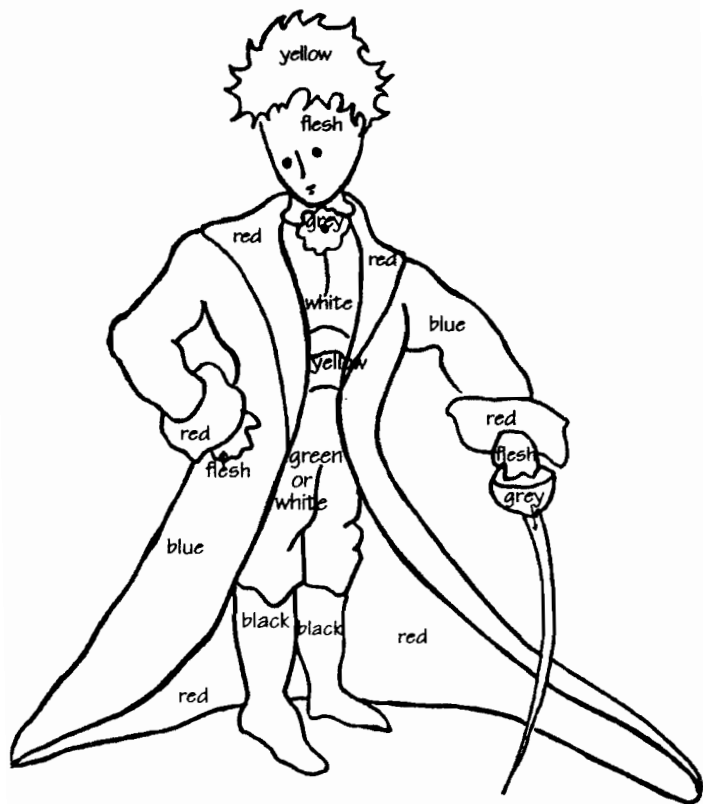


ILLUSTRATION U.

Blank template to be colored as shown in illustration T.



Incidental Music Tape Cues

(All music composed and arranged by Rick Cummins)

1. Solo Voice (Prologue)
2. Solo Voice (Prologue)
3. Solo Voice (Prologue)
4. The Storm
5. Aviator Draws the "Hat"
6. Aviator Draws the Ram
7. Aviator Draws the Old Sheep
8. Scene Transition
9. Sunset Music
10. Snake Rattle
11. Little Prince Appears Again
12. Birth of the Rose
13. Fingers Touch
14. Underscore Rose and Little Prince Goodbye Scene
15. Aviator Angry, Then Begins to Draw Rose
16. Segue to King
17. Segue to Conceited Man
18. Segue to Businessman
19. Segue to Lamplighter
20. Segue to Geographer
21. The Snake
22. Snake Confronts Aviator/Little Prince Argues with Aviator
23. Little Prince Cries
24. Snake Rattle and Solo Voice
25. Underscore Aviator's Apology to Little Prince
26. Desert Flower/Mountain Echo/Wall of Roses/Segue to Fox
27. Fox Scampers Again
28. Little Prince Tames Fox
29. Little Prince Returns to Wall of Roses/Fox's Secret
30. Walk in the Desert
31. Little Prince Repeats Fox's Secret to Aviator
32. Aviator Carries Little Prince and Finds the Well
33. Plane Starts/Aviator Finds Little Prince with Snake
34. Little Prince Says Goodbye /Little Prince's Final Return to Snake
35. Epilogue